

XXVIII.—Remarks on Brandt's Siberian Bunting (*Emberiza cioides*). By HENRY SEEBOHM, F.L.S., F.G.S.

OUR Editor having requested me to furnish him with some account of Brandt's Siberian Bunting (*Emberiza cioides*), I have had great pleasure in putting together my notes on this species. Brandt's Siberian Bunting is a very common bird in the eastern half of Southern Siberia, but it is not an Arctic species. I did not meet with it in the valley of the Yenesay during the several weeks which I spent on the Arctic Circle, where I found the nests of the Little Bunting (*Emberiza pusilla*), and also shot examples of the Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schœnielus*), the Little Reed Bunting (*Emberiza passerina*), the Rustic Bunting (*Emberiza rustica*), the Pine Bunting (*Emberiza leucocephala*), and the Yellow-breasted Bunting (*Emberiza aureola*), to say nothing of the Snow Bunting and the Lapland Bunting, which passed through on migration to breed on the tundras beyond the limits of forest-growth. Brandt's Siberian Bunting is neither a bird of the tundra, nor of the forest, nor of the steppe, but of the bare places on the rocky hill-sides and the banks of stony streams. I found it extremely abundant about ten degrees south of the Arctic Circle, on the rough bare hills near Krasnoyarsk. It was generally to be seen perched on the top of some tall plant on the roadside. It is the eastern representative of the Meadow Bunting (*Emberiza cia*), but appears to be quite distinct from that species. The range of the Meadow Bunting extends from Spain, across Southern Europe and Turkestan to South-west Siberia, as far east as Lake Saissan. From the last-mentioned locality I have an example collected by General Prjevalski, which does not differ from examples that I collected in Greece. But, although the Meadow Bunting does not seem to intergrade with Brandt's Siberian Bunting, the latter species unquestionably intergrades with Giglioli's Chinese Bunting (*Emberiza castaneiceps*), which is regarded as a distinct species by Mr. Sharpe in the 'Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum.' The characters relied upon are:—(a) that it is smaller; but my Yenesay examples

vary in the length of wing of the males from 3·5 to 3·1 inches, and those in the Swinhoe collection from China vary from 3·1 to 2·9 inches: (*b*) that it wants the tiny black spot on the chin; but more than half of my Yenesay examples want it also, though it is present in none of my Chinese skins: (*c*) that it has much less white on the outer tail-feathers; but this assertion is only true on an average, some Chinese examples having more white on the outer tail-feathers than a selected few of the Yenesay skins. The Chinese form can, therefore only claim to be subspecifically distinct from the Siberian form under the name of *Emberiza cioides castaneiceps*.

The special interest attaching to this bird at the present moment is that an example exhibited at a recent meeting of the Zoological Society was purchased by Mr. Robert W. Chase from a Mr. Matthew Bailey, who informed him that he had stuffed it from the flesh, and that it had been obtained by a fisherman at Flamborough, south of the headland, in October 1887. This specimen is in autumn plumage and is a male, but from the small extent of the chestnut on the breast evidently not a very old one. The wing and tail measure each exactly 3 inches; there is no black spot on the chin, and the amount of white on the outside tail-feathers is so nearly intermediate between the two extremes that it would pass for either of them. On the whole, however, the specimen approaches rather nearer to *Emberiza cioides castaneiceps* than to the typical form.

XXIX.—Notes on some New-Zealand Birds.

By T. W. KIRK, F.R.M.S.

1. RHIPIDURA FULIGINOSA, Sparrm. Black Fantail. "Ti-wakawaki."

This bird is generally believed to be confined to the South Island; there are, however, several well-authenticated records of its capture in the north. A specimen was quite recently shot at Levin, a new township on the Wellington